

Natural gas prices drop just in time for winter

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Utah's natural gas prices, which spiked to unprecedented levels after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, are about to drop substantially again, just in advance of the winter heating system. Questar, the area's leading gas supplier, Thursday asked the Utah Public Service Commission for a \$104.3 million dollar rate cut.

"The bottom line is we've had four straight decreases this year totaling about 22 percent." Questar spokesman Chad Jones told ABC 4 News. "We couldn't be happier to pass it along at this time of year."

The hurricanes wrecked gas transmission infrastructure, which took about 20% of the available gas off the market last winter. That drove prices so high so fast that some low income Utahns had difficult choices.

"It's either food or gas bill, what do you do? It's been a challenge for them," said Annette Wade of Catholic Community Services, which administers aid programs for those who can't afford their utilities. "I think it will help them quite a bit to be able to afford utilities again, give them some hope because a lot of them got a huge bill and they got scared and it made them nervous. Seeing it go down will help them to manage their bills better."

The average Utah homeowner will save about \$279 a year with all four of this year's rate reductions. This latest price cut takes effect November 1.